

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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R 251612Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7089

INFO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

COMCARIBSEAFRON

CINCLANT

UNCLAS BRIDGETOWN 0742

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: GJ PINS PINT

SUBJ: GRENADA: COMMISSION OF INQUIRY RESUMES HEARINGS:

SIGNIFICANCE OF BY-ELECTIONS CHALLENGED

REF: BRIDGETOWN 0665

CINCLANT FOR POLAD

BEGIN SUMMARY: COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INVESTIGATING ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN GRENADA RESUMED HEARINGS APRIL 22. OUTGOING POLICE COMMISSIONER TESTIFIES ON RECRUITMENT AND ROLE OF POLICE AIDES. COMMISSION TO HOLD CLOSED HEARINGS FOR TESTIMONY OF POLICE OFFICIAL IMPLICATED IN SEVERAL INCIDENTS OF ALLEGED POLICE BRUTALITY. OPPOSITION SPOKESMEN, CITING LOW VOTER TURNOUT, CHALLENGE SIGNIFICANCE OF GULP VICTORIES IN BY-ELECTION. END SUMMARY.

1. COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INVESTIGATING ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN GRENADA RESUMED HEARINGS APRIL 22. RESTORATION OF COMMISSION, HEADED BY RETIRED JAMAICAN CHIEF JUSTICE HERBERT
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DUFFUS, WAS ONE OF DEMANDS ACCEPTED BY PM ERIC GAIRY DURING

NEGOTIATIONS WHICH ENDED GRENADA PORT STRIKE. SINCE RESUMING, COMMISSION HAS HEARD TESTIMONY OF OTHER ALLEGED VICTIMS OF POLICE BRUTALITY, ONE OF WHOM CLAIMS TO HAVE BEEN SHOT BY ASSISTANT POLICE SUPERINTENDENT INNOCENT BELMAR WHILE BEING HELD AT GRENVILLE JAIL LAST NOV 4.

2. COMMISSION ALSO HEARD TESTIMONY APRIL 23 FROM ACTING POLICE COMMISSIONER NUGENT DAVID, WHO SAID HE KNEW SOME MEMBERS OF GRENADA RESERVE POLICE (POLICE AIDES) TO BE MEMBERS OF SO-CALLED "MONGOOSE GANG," GAIRY'S PERSONAL SECURITY FORCE. DAVID REPORTEDLY TESTIFIED THAT SOME POLICE AIDES HAD CRIMINAL BACKGROUNDS, BUT SAID RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR RECRUITMENT RESTED WITH MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY AND NOT HIS OFFICE. DAVID ALSO SAID HE HAD ORDERED INVESTIGATION INTO POLICE ACTIONS DURING ARREST OF SIX NEW JEWEL MOVEMENT LEADERS IN GRENVILLE LAST NOV 18 AFTER DISCOVERING THEY HAD RECEIVED SERIOUS INJURIES/ DAVID, WHO IS EXPECTED TO LEAVE HIS POST SHORTLY, DENIED ANY PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT IN ALLEGED ACTS OF BRUTALITY.

3. COMMISSION HAS REPORTEDLY GRANTED REQUEST BY SUPERINTENDENT BELMAR THAT HIS TESTIMONY BE HEARD IN CAMERA FOR SECURITY REASONS. BELMAR HAS HEADED EASTERN DIVISION (GRENVILLE) OF GRENADA POLICE FORCE AND HAS BEEN LINKED TO SEVERAL INCIDENTS, INCLUDING NOV 18 BEATINGS WHICH TOUCHED OFF WIDESPREAD STRIKES AND PROTESTS. BELMAR HAS ALSO CLAIMED RIGHT TO WITHHOLD EVIDENCE FROM COMMISSION FOR REASONS OF "NATIONAL SECURITY."

4. GOVERNOR LEO DEGALE HAS GRANTED REQUEST FROM NJM LAWYER LLOYD NOEL FOR EXTENSION OF COMMISSION'S TERMS OF REFERENCE TO INCLUDE PERIOD FROM JAN 1 TO 26, THUS ENABLING COMMISSION TO PROBE DEATH OF BUSINESSMAN RUPERT BISHOP, FATHER OF NJM LEADER MAURICE BISHOP, AND LOOTING OF OPPOSITION OWNED BUSINESSES, ALLEGEDLY SANCTIONED BY GOG. LLOYD MADE NJM'S CONTINUED PARTICIPATION IN HEARINGS CONTINGENT UPON GRANTING OF REQUEST. PRIVATELY, HOWEVER, NJM MEMBERS PESSIMISTIC THAT GOG WILL IMPLEMENT COMMISSION'S ANTICIPATED RECOMMENDATIONS, EVEN THOUGH GAIRY IS PLEDGED TO DO SO BY HIS SETTLEMENT WITH DOCKWORKERS.

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5. ARTICLE IN APRIL 21 EDITION OF BARBADOS "NATION" CLAIMS THAT BASED ON RELIABLE FIGURES LESS THAN 30 PERCENT OF REGISTERED VOTERS PARTICIPATED IN APRIL 5 GRENADA BY-ELECTIONS, WHICH ADDED TWO NEW GRENADA UNITED LABOR PARTY MEMBERS TO HOUSE. BOTH NJM AND OPPOSITION GRENADA NATIONAL PARTY BOYCOTTED ELECTIONS, AND MANY OPPOSITION SUPPORTERS SAID TO HAVE STAYED HOME RATHER THAN VOTE IN CONTEST WHOSE OUTCOME ONE NJX OFFICIAL

DESCRIBED AS FORGONE CONCLUSION. THOUGH EIGHTEEN YEAR-OLDS
WERE GIVEN VOTE IN LEGISLATION PASSED PRIOR TO GRENADA'S
1971 GENERAL ELECTION, OPPOSITION GROUPS CHARGE THAZ VOTER
LISTS HAVE NOT BEEN UPDATED TO REFLECT NEW VOTERS AND CLAIM
THAT IN FAIR, IMPARTIALLY SUQERVISED ELECTION GAIRY WOULD BE
OUSTED. THEY HAVE THUS BRANDED REPORTS GIVING IMPRESSION THAT
BY-ELECTION REPRESENTED SIGNIFICANT VICTORY FOR GAIRY GOVERNMENT
AS INACCURATE AND MISLEADING.
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